Filipina Mothers’ Perceptions about Childbirth with a Traditional Birth Attendant

By Mariquit Hadwiger, MS(N), RN
Stephen Hadwiger, PhD, RN
Truman State University
STTI 41st Biennial Convention
November 1, 2011
Research Problem

- UN 5th Millenium Development Goal (2000):
  - Reduce global Maternal Mortality ratios by 75%

- Presence of a skilled birth attendant reduces mortality rates (Koblinsky & Campbell, 2003)

- 54% of rural Filipina women use a traditional birth attendant (*paltera*) for childbirth (DHRP, 2003)

- Safe Motherhood and Women’s Health Program (Dept. of Health Republic of Philippines, 2000)
  - Goal: Every childbirth attended by skilled health care provider
Maternal Mortality Ratio estimates in the Philippines: (Erichta, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Ratio (per 100,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987-1993:</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2006:</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World 2000</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States 2000</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change in Ratio from ’87-93 to ’99-06 was only a decrease of 22.5% (far short of the 75% goal of the UN 5th Millenium Goal.)
Purpose of this study:

To explore pregnancy and childbirth perceptions among Filipina women from Iloilo communities in the Philippines who used a traditional birth attendant (paltera) for childbirth.
Research Design

• Qualitative Field Study
  • Recorded interviews and field observations
  • Interview guide & informed consent
    • Backtranslated in dialect of informants
  • Approved by Truman State University Institutional Review Board
Field Setting:

- Iloilo Province
  - Central Visayas Region (Panay Island)
  - Republic of the Philippines

- Three municipalities:
  - Municipality #1 7-10 km. from Iloilo City Proper
  - Municipality #2 15-20 km from Iloilo City Proper
  - Municipality #3 25-30 km from Iloilo City Proper
Data Collection

- **Instrument development** –
  - Interview guide and consent form developed in English
  - translated in Hiligaynon using the back-translation method (Brislin, Loner & Thorndike, 1973)
    - Tested and Piloted - revised to be culturally and semantically relevant to the target population
  - Informants were interviewed at their convenience in a private location.
  - Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed into the dialect (Hiligaynon or Karay-a).
Data Analysis

• After the transcription, primary researcher reviewed each transcript for accuracy.

• Conventional Content Analysis for Mothers’ transcripts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)
  • Inductive process for development of themes and patterns

• Findings were presented to 14 mothers for **confirmability** (verification of findings)
## Network (Snowball) Sampling: 26 Rural Filipina Mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Mn = 40.3 years old; SD = 12.6; range = 20-62 yrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status:</td>
<td>88% married; 12% (widow, single, separated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Children:</td>
<td>Mn = 4.4 children; SD = 2.6; range = 1-11 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Children Delivered by paltera:</td>
<td>Mn = 3.3 children; SD = 2.6; range = 1-10 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (yrs):</td>
<td>Mn = 10 years; SD = 2.6; Range = 5-15 years 77% completed HS; 27% had some college years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Employment: | Housewives 17 (65.4%)  
Self-employed 5 (19.2%)  
Other (massage, teacher, nanny, store) 4 (15.4%) |
| Husband’s Job: | Carpenter 6 (26%)  
Driver (tricycle, jeepney, truck) 5 (22%)  
Laborer 3 (13%)  
Vendor (fish, coconuts) 2 (9%)  
Other 7 (30%) |
| Family Income (mo): | Mn = 8,494 pesos/mo; SD = 4,573 (44 pesos/US$1) |
| Distance to Hospital: | Mn = 10.5 km; SD = 4.3; Range = 1 – 25 km |
(Findings) Theme: Mothers’ Folk Beliefs

• Pattern: For the Welfare of My Baby
  • According to the elders that if you see a rope you need to step on it, not cross over it, to prevent cord coil to the baby. [harmless]
  • I do not do heavy work, when I am pregnant.. or lift heavy object because my uterus is low, and if I lift heavy things it causes pain. [harmless]
  • When I walk, I really try to be careful not to slip, I do not jump or wear high heals shoes.. to prevent cleft lip or any deformity for my baby.. [harmless]
• **Pattern: For the Welfare of My Baby**
  
  • During the evening or night, if I have to go out, I wear hats to protect my baby and me from dew, which is not good for the baby. [harmless]
  
  • I do not eat twin bananas so I won’t have twins. I carry ginger with me when I go somewhere unfamiliar to protect my baby from evil spirits (*aswang*) – *that may cause the* head to have extra water. [harmless]
  
  • While I am pregnant I go to the paltera to have a massage of my tummy (*luk-ad*) so *that* my baby will be straight and normal during delivery [harmful]
Theme: Mothers’ Folk Beliefs

- **Pattern: During Labor**
  - During labor [mother] has to drink fresh raw native egg– to facilitate easy delivery and strength [harmful]; eat slippery vegetables (tugabang) for smooth delivery [harmless].
  - Do not let people come in the house during delivery, it closes the birth canal and the baby will not come out. [harmless]
  - *The placenta need to be buried by the spouse in the location where the water from the roof is draining so the child will grow into a bright nice person not rude or disrespectful to elders.* [harmless]
  - *If you have problem with your blood pressure during labor, the paltera will advise you to have ginger treatment (paluy-a) because you were noticed by the spirits of your ancestors* [harmful]
Theme: Mothers’ Folk Beliefs

• Pattern: Trust in God
  • . . So we do not have any money (pigado), God will help us. [harmless?]
  • .. so I have to accept that God loves me since He shares with me the cross that He carried [harmless]
  • ... and God loves me... who wants to refuse going to the hospital, but because of poverty you refuse it and God will take care of us... [harmless]
  • I tie around my waist the picture of the sacred heart of Jesus, the Lord of Pardon. [harmless]
Theme: Mothers’ care for...

- Pattern: Healthy Pregnancy
  - I eat *laswa* (boiled green vegetables), because I cannot afford to buy pork or chicken.. I sauté them with salted fish. [beneficial]
  - .. I eat vegetables and fish, drink a lot of water and limit sweets.. eat fruits.. [beneficial]
  - I take vitamins, drink milk, exercise .. walking .. [beneficial]
  - --if you are pregnant it is not good to travel long distance—
  - I go for prenatal check –up, drink vitamins and abstain from sex.. [beneficial]
  - I do not squat when I do laundry and I do not jump.. [beneficial]
Theme: Mothers’ care for...

- Pattern: Recovery from childbirth
  - The doctor said to my husband go buy some kaldo (soup) for your wife.. Chicken soup with papaya and malunggay
  - They give you soup, so you can recover and regain your strength..
  - ..You eat (laswa) boiled vegetable soup so you can recover..
  - You drink hot soup .. Kaldo (a type of rice soup with chicken).. my husband tried to ask someone to prepare this for me so I will regain my strength back.. and I can produce a lot of milk for the baby..
Theme: Childbirth: Contrasting Home to Hospital and Lying-In Clinic

- Pattern: No Money (Pigado or Wala Kwarta)
  - .. we do not have money.. lack of financial... the paltera you can negotiate the payment or pay by installment..
  - The reason that I choose the paltera is that is all we can afford..
Theme: Childbirth: Contrasting Home to Hospital and Lying-In Clinic

• Pattern: *Personal comfort*

• It is nice to deliver at home. You can rest right away after you deliver compared to the hospital, in which there are two of you in a single bed, and your sutures are painful, you cannot even straighten your legs. It is painful when they do IE, unlike at home that after you deliver you can rest then.

• After you deliver at the lying in clinic 4 hours they let you go home, even you are still flowing heavily, and you have to walk to get home. If delivering at home with paltera, after delivering, you can lie down and rest until you are ready to get up.
Theme: Childbirth: Contrasting Home to Hospital and Lying-In Clinic

- Pattern: Unfriendly Hospitals
  - "..my 4th child the doctor was mad at me when I told her that the baby is about to come out, she told me to hold on from pushing or else she will suture me inside there"
  - "..the doctors and nurses were scolding me when I delivered at the Provincial Hospital, then my next delivery I do not want to deliver in the hospital, besides we do not have enough money..
  - ".. I am scared of the hospital, it is not that the paltera is good and the hospital is bad. With the paltera, not a lot of people present, just the two of you. Unlike in the hospital there are a lot of people to watch [your private area]"
Economic Barriers

What economic barriers have you heard in the voices of the women?


Acknowledgements

- Truman State University
- TSU Department of Nursing
- Gatekeepers who facilitated contact with informants
- Transcriptionists
- The Filipina mothers
- Dr. Stephen Hadwiger, PhD, RN
Any questions?